

A REVISION OF THE GENUS *MENODORA*¹

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HISTORY

The genus *Menodora* was founded in 1809 by Humboldt and Bonpland² in the 'Plantae Aequinoxiales'; it was based on a Mexican plant, collected on their expedition to Mexico, Central and South America, which was described and illustrated as *Menodora helianthemoides*. The word *Menodora*, derived from the Greek words, μένος, force or courage, and δῶρον, gift, had reference to the force or strength it gave to animals. Since the fruit was unknown to them, Humboldt and Bonpland doubtfully referred the genus to the natural family Jasmineae (now Oleaceae), as established by Jussieu³ in his 'Genera Plantarum.' In 1825 Kunth⁴ elaborated upon the original description of this new genus, making use of the type material. Unfortunately, these specimens had no fruit and thus his description of the fruit as a bilocular, bivalved capsule was taken solely on the faith of Bonpland. He added one significant character, namely, that there were two ovules in each of the two cells of the ovary; he assigned *Menodora* to the Acanthaceae.

The following year Chamisso and Schlechtendal⁵ in 'Linnaea' published a new genus, called *Bolivaria*, in honor of Simon Bolivar, the liberator of South America. The plants were collected in the vicinity of Buenos Aires, Argentina, and described as two species, *B. integrifolia* and *B. trifida*. The striking features of these South American plants were their circumscissile capsules, 5-parted calyx, and 4-seeded cells of the fruit; these characters were considered to be generically distinct from the multifid calyx,

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² Humboldt, A. & Bonpland, A. Pl. Aequin. 2: 98. pl. 110. 1809.

³ Jussieu, A. L. Gen. Pl. 104. 1789.

⁴ Kunth, C. S., in HBK. Nov. Gen. et Sp. Pl. 7: 199. 1825.

⁵ Chamisso, A. & Schlechtendal, D., in Linnaea 1: 268, pl. 4, fig. 1. 1826.

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